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JOINT EVALUATION

OF

SOVIET MISSILE THREAT IN CUBA

PREPARED BY

Guided Missile and Astronautics Intelligence Committee
Joint Atomic Energy Intelligence Committee
National Photographic Interpretation Center

2000 HOURS

19 OCTEBER 1962

This report is based on relatively complete photo interpretation of U-2 photography made on:

14 October 1962 Mission 3101
15 October 1962 Missions 3102 & 3103

17 October 1962 Missions 3104, 3105, 3106, 3109 and part of 3107 and 3108.

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Offensive Missile Deployment*

1. At least one Soviet regiment of 1020-nm (SS-4) medium range ballistic missiles is now deployed in western Cuba at two launch sites near San Cristobal. Each of these sites presently contains eight missiles and four unrevetted, field-type launchers which rely on mobile erection, checkout, and support equipment. These missiles are probably those reported moving into this area during September. Although there is continuing improvement of these sites, this regiment must be considered operational now. The presence of eight missiles at each site indicates a refire capability from each of the four launchers. Refire could be accomplished in 4 to 6 hours after the initial firing. A third facility in this area, previously identified as Launch Site 3, could be either a technical support area for this regiment or a third launch site; however, the early stage of development precludes a positive identification of this activity.

2. An additional regiment of Soviet 1020-nm (SS-4) missiles is now deployed at two sites east of Havana in the Sagua La Grande area, nine miles apart. These sites closely resemble the sites at San Cristobal but appear to be more permanent in nature. Terrain features have dictated considerable clearing and grading for deployment of the system. Also, there are permanent structures at the launch pad areas which are not found at the San Cristobal sites. There are four launch positions at each site and we estimate an operational capability for each site within one week. The sizes of the missiles, associated equipment, and buildings found at the San Cristobal and Sagua La Grande sites are almost identical and are compatible with the 1020-nm MRBM system.

3. Two fixed sites are under construction in the Guanajay area near Havana. Four launchers, two blockhouses, and underground propellant storage are being built at each site. We believe that the 2200-nm (SS-5)

*See Figures 1-9.

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IRBM is probably intended for these sites because they closely resemble Soviet sites believed to be associated with testing and deployment of this missile system. Site 1 is considered to be in a mid- to late-stage of construction and should be operational within six weeks. Site 2 is in an earlier stage of construction and could be operational between 15 and 30 December 1962. There are no missiles or support equipment detectable within the Guanajay Area at the present time.

Command and Control

4. All of the offensive missile systems in Cuba are Soviet manned and controlled. We believe that offensive action by these systems would be commanded from the Soviet Union, but have not yet identified the communication link.

Nuclear Warheads for Offensive Missiles

5. We believe that a nuclear warhead storage site is under construction adjacent to the most complete of the fixed missile launch sites near Guanajay (see Figure 6). This site could become operational at about the same time as the associated Launch Site 1. Construction of similar facilities has not yet been identified at other sites.

6. An especially secure port facility located at Punta Gerardo may be used for nuclear weapons offloading (see Figure 10).

7. There is still no evidence of currently operational nuclear storage facilities in Cuba. Nevertheless, one must assume that nuclear weapons could now be in Cuba to support the operational missile capability as it becomes available.

8. The 1020-nm missiles would probably be equipped with nuclear warheads yielding 2 to 3 megatons. The 2200-nm IRBMs could have 3- to

5-megaton warheads, if our planning estimate for the payload weight is correct.

Offensive Force Levels

9. We believe that there are now at least two regiments equipped with 1020-nm MRBM's in Cuba. One is located in the San Cristobal area and the other in the Sagua La Grande area. In addition, we believe a regiment equipped with 2200-nm IRBM's is being deployed to the Guanajay area. When operational, present MRBM and IRBM units will have an aggregate total of 24 launchers. An estimated schedule of site activation is presented in Table 1. Each launcher will have a refire capability. A summary of the MRBM and IRBM threat, including the projected number of operational ready missiles for each site, is presented in Table 2. The corresponding nuclear yield deliverable from each site is shown in Table 3. The technical characteristics of the two offensive missile weapons systems are summarized in Table 4.

Support and Supply

10. Offensive missile systems are being introduced into Cuba, probably through the Port of Mariel. A new Soviet ship, the Poltava, possibly designed as a ballistic missile transport, has been noted making frequent trips between the USSR and Cuba. This ship has made two trips to Cuba since 17 July, and is next estimated to arrive in Cuba on or about 2 November 1962. See Figures 11 and 12.

11. Possible central missile checkout, storage, and repair bases have been located at Soroa, between the two estern deployment areas, and at Managua, south of Havana.

12. It is significant that three of the Soviet missiles now being deployed in Cuba (SS-4, SS-5, SA-2) probably use red fuming nitric acid as the oxidizer, permitting exploitation of a common system for propellant supply and storage.

Coastal Defense Missiles

13. Three coastal defense missile sites have now been identified in Cuba, two of which must now be considered operational (Banes and Santa Cruz del Norte). These cruise missiles have a range of 35 to 40 miles and are probably derived from the AS-1. They can be fired in about 10 minutes in an alert status, with subsequent firings from each launcher at 5 minute intervals.

Air Defense Missiles

14. There are now 26 surface-to-air missile (SA-2) sites located in Cuba, two of which appear to be alternate sites. See Figure 13. Of these, 16 are believed to be individually operational at the present time. The remaining SA-2 sites could be operational in two to three weeks. The list of sites considered to be operational is presented in Table 5.

15. Such SA-2 sites provide for six launchers with missiles, and an additional six missiles in an adjacent hold area. The initial firing can take place anytime after an alert, providing the site has reached readiness status. Reload and refire from a single launcher will take approximately 3 to 5 minutes.

16. Valid air defense tracking data of Soviet PVO type has been noted in COMINT since 12 October 1962, indicating that an integrated air defense system is now approaching operational status.

Tactical Missiles

17. There are several refugee reports indicating the presence of tactical (FROG) missiles in Cuba, although there is no photographic confirmation thus far.

Significance

18. The magnitude of the total Soviet missile force being deployed indicates that the USSR intends to develop Cuba into a prime strategic base, rather than as a token show of strength. Some of the deployment characteristics include permanent elements which suggests that provision is being made for Soviet presence of long duration.

19. The rate of deployment to date, as well as the speed and variety of construction, indicates that the Soviet military build up in Cuba is being carried out on an urgent basis. This build-up has proceeded by deploying defensive weapons first, followed by deployment of offensive weapons. The pattern of missile deployment appears calculated to achieve quick operational status and then to complete site construction.

20. A mixed force of 1020- and 2200-nm missiles would give the USSR a significant strategic strike capability against almost all targets in the U.S. (see Figure 2). By deploying stockpiled MRBM IRBMs at overseas bases, the Soviet Union will supplement its ICBM home force in a significant way.

21. This same offensive force also poses a common threat to the U.S. and a large portion of Latin America for the first time.

22. The USSR is making a major military investment in Cuba with some of their most effective guided missile systems. The planning for this operation must have started at least one year ago and the operation itself begun last spring.